

English 280

Welcome to Western's Writing Program. This handout, along with your instructor's syllabus, will help you understand what you will be doing in your 280 class. You should read both carefully, ask questions about any points you don't understand, and keep both for future reference.

Course Goals and Objectives

English 280, the second required writing course at Western Illinois University, is to be completed during the sophomore year. The course reinforces the centrality of writing as a way of discovering and clarifying ideas, making informed judgments, communicating with members of a specific audience, and arguing toward conclusions.

Knowledge is developed as researchers share insights, exchange ideas, and debate positions. Reading, discussing, researching, and writing all play important roles in the social construction of knowledge. In 280, you will participate in developing the shared knowledge of the classroom research community as you explore a significant topic (or topics) of academic interest.

In learning to write effectively, you will

- Build on strategies learned in English 180 to exchange ideas and to develop useful writing practices through
 - group discussion
 - conference
 - peer review
 - collaborative work
- Analyze, evaluate, and synthesize material from a variety of sources--primary and secondary; formal and informal; and experience, reading, and research--through
 - summary
 - close reading
 - class discussion
 - library/web/database research
- Further recognize, improve, and develop your writing and reading processes by
 - reading critically
 - continuing to build your invention, drafting, revising, and editing skills
 - utilizing genres appropriate to the writing situation, for example, argument, analysis, report
- In addition to the rest of the semester's assignments, produce documented, multi-sourced writing in two or more papers by
 - revising with teacher's response
 - using others' ideas without losing control of your texts
 - using MLA documentation or another documentation style consistently
 - using the conventions of Edited American English
- Discover and then incorporate a variety of rhetorical strategies and academic conventions into your writing, taking into consideration
 - audience
 - purpose
 - voice
 - authority

Prerequisites

There are two prerequisites for English 280:

- 1) Completion of English 180 (or a first semester writing course accepted for transfer) with a grade of C or better. If you did not earn C or better in 180, you must repeat the course before taking 280.
- 2) Completion of a minimum of 24 hours of college credit.

Computers in 280

Even though many sections of 280 will not meet in computer classrooms, you will be required to write with a word processing program, use the Internet for research, and/or participate in class E-mail discussion. Your student fees give you access to computer labs in various locations on campus.

University Writing Center

The Writing Center is a free service offered by the English Department and the Provost's Office First-Year Experience Program to all WIU students and faculty. Writing Centers are located in Simpkins Hall 341 and inside the North Quad Computer Center in Wetzel Hall. Tutors are available to help with any aspect of the writing process. You may visit the Writing Centers during their hours (see the website). Or you may call the Simpkins Center (298-2815) or the Wetzel Center (298-3477) to arrange an appointment. The Writing Center homepage is <http://www.wiu.edu/uwc/>.

Grades

In English 280, you can earn a grade of A, B, C, U, or F. If you receive a U or an F in 280, you must repeat the course in order to fulfill the Communication Skills requirement. Instructors determine the grading scales used to assign grades. The Western Writing Program has established the following guidelines for U and F grades:

U Grades

If you are not performing satisfactory work but are making a good faith effort to pass a course, you can earn a U (unsatisfactory) grade. You will earn no grade points or credits for a grade of U. However, the U grade is not a penalizing grade because it is not calculated in grade point average (GPA).

We consider a good faith effort to include all of the following:

- attending and participating in class
- completing and submitting all components of major papers (bibliographies, drafts, and other materials required by instructors), and
- completing assigned reading and other homework in a timely fashion

If you meet requirements but are still not writing at a C or better level at the end of the term, you should receive a U grade for the course. The U grade reinforces our belief that writing is a process which requires considerable time and effort. We believe students who attempt to do the work but fail to meet our standards should not be penalized, but should be permitted to retake the course and continue to improve their writing abilities.

F Grades

If you are not making a good faith effort, you should earn an F (failing) grade. You will earn no grade points or credits for a grade of F.

Because the F grade is a penalizing grade which negatively affects GPA, it is reserved for students whose effort is unsatisfactory for one or more reasons:

- poor attendance and participation
- failure to complete and submit all components of major papers (bibliographies, drafts, and other materials required by instructors), or
- academic dishonesty

If you choose not to complete course assignments and/or disregard course requirements, you should receive an F grade for the course.

An I (incomplete) grade may be given only when you fail to complete course requirements due to documented circumstances beyond your control. The mere failure to complete an assignment does not justify the recording of an incomplete, unless illness or other emergency is the cause.

Academic Dishonesty

Dishonesty of any kind with respect to examinations, course assignments, alteration of records, or illegal possession of examinations is considered cheating. It is your responsibility not only to abstain from cheating but also to avoid making it possible for others to cheat. Any student who knowingly helps another student to cheat is as guilty of cheating as the student he or she assists. The submission of the work of someone else as one's own constitutes plagiarism. Academic honesty requires that ideas or materials taken from another source for use in a course paper or project be fully acknowledged. (See Student Academic Integrity Policy in the University Policy Manual, <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>.)

Final Examinations

The final examination is considered one of a course's scheduled meeting periods. A course in which a final is not given must still meet during this time. The final exam schedule for all courses is printed in the course schedule book and on-line at <http://www.wiu.edu/registrar/exams.php>.

Attendance

The Department of English and Journalism supports the right of individual faculty members to penalize you for attendance problems, provided the policy and penalties are described in the course syllabus.